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LONDON FOR TSOU

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KPAQ KMDR OIIP MU

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AMERICAN PRESSURE ON IRAN, ARAB MEDIA AS "TRUTH," AVERTING A CRISIS WITH SYRIA

American Pressure on Iran

11. The government-owned daily "Oman" published an editorial on January 8th under the title "Nuclear Weapons and Attacks Against Iran":

"American threats from Secretary of State Rice to refer the Iranian nuclear file to the [U.N.] Security Council come in the framework of the unnecessary American vitriol against Iran...Iran has declared repeatedly that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, and that it is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, adhering to that organization's laws and regulations. However, [Israel] has 200 nuclear bombs, enough to destroy the whole Middle East. The West does not mind Israel possessing nuclear weapons, but does mind Iran having them."

Arab Media as "Truth"

12. The privately owned "Al-Watan" published an editorial on January 7th entitled "Why [Bush] Complains about Professional [Media] Practice":

"It is a surprise that President Bush complained that the material broadcast by Arab channels gives a bad impression of United States. These comments come from the leader of the most powerful country, which dominates the Arab and world media. The sources used by Arab news outlets, wherever they broadcast from, are western sources...[Bush's] complaints emanate from the fact that the Arab media has placed itself on the map of the international media. In the past, they used to get their information and news, especially during a war, from American military sources. However, the situation changed and Arab channels were able to reach the place of action, with live broadcasts showing the conflict between reality and American lies. When Arab television broadcasts what is happening in Palestine and Iraq, and how attacks against civilians are carried out by tanks, and victims' bodies are torn up by prohibited weapons, this is the truth even if American leaders do not like it."

Averting A Crisis with Syria

13. "Al-Watan" carried an op-ed piece by Jordanian columnist Mohammed Naji Amayrah on January 8th entitled "Egyptian Political Moves":

"We hope that the political move led by President Mubarak fulfills its goal of preventing harm towards Syria. Mubarak visited Saudi Arabia and France after his meeting with Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad, in an effort to contain the crisis. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and France consider cooperation with Syria to be vital to decrease the threats from America and some European states concerning the assassination of Al-Hariri and what the U.S. calls "terrorism" in Iraq. The United States has called for Syria's complete cooperation with the International Investigation Committee, stating that no one is above the law. This indicates that al-Assad and his foreign minister were called for investigation."

STEWART